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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3620th meeting of the Security Council, held on 24 January 1996 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Somalia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia dated 19 January 1996 (S/1996/42) and is deeply concerned about the absence of any credible progress towards national reconciliation. It calls upon all Somali political leaders and parties to return to an inclusive process of consultation and negotiation aimed at national reconciliation leading to the establishment of a broad-based national government.

"The Security Council welcomes with appreciation the efforts of the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States, the European Union and neighbouring States in promoting national dialogue in the search for a solution to the Somali crisis. These efforts demonstrate the commitment of the international community not to abandon the people of Somalia. It reaffirms that the people of Somalia bear ultimate responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and restoring peace. In this respect, the Council urges the leaders of Somali factions to reject violence and place the interests of the country and people above their personal differences and political ambitions.

"The Security Council also welcomes and supports the Secretary-General's intention to maintain the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS). It stresses the importance of its maintaining close cooperation with the regional organizations, monitoring developments in Somalia and continuing contacts with Somali factions. It looks forward to the return of UNPOS to Somalia as soon as circumstances permit.

"The Security Council expresses deep concern at the continuing conflict. The resulting insecurity, banditry and general lawlessness increase the suffering of the civilian population. The Council condemns

the harassment, beatings, abduction and killings of personnel of international humanitarian organizations, and underlines the responsibility of all parties in Somalia for ensuring the safety and security of humanitarian and other international personnel. This atmosphere of insecurity has regrettably forced the United Nations agencies to relocate international personnel thus hindering the smooth delivery of much needed humanitarian assistance.

"The Security Council commends the valiant efforts of United Nations and international humanitarian agencies and their Somali personnel for the courage and determination to render assistance to the people of Somalia. The Council encourages Member States to continue to provide humanitarian assistance in order to avoid a further deterioration of the current situation.

"The Security Council considers the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian assistance to be a crucial factor in the overall security and stability of Somalia. In this respect, the closure of Mogadishu main seaport and other transportation facilities severely aggravates the present situation and poses a potential major impediment to future emergency deliveries. The Council calls upon the Somali parties and factions to open those facilities unconditionally.

"The Security Council reminds all States of their obligation to implement fully the general and complete embargo imposed by paragraph 5 of resolution 733 (1992) on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia. In this respect it calls on all States to refrain from any actions which might exacerbate the situation in Somalia.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to continue to keep it informed about developments in Somalia. The Council remains seized of the matter."